NEW YORK TIMES - 30 MARCH 1969 (1 APRIL)



# A Power Struggle Between Two Fiefdoms

**WASHINGTON**—In an establishment where differences normally are concealed by decorum or backslapping, a bristling power struggle has developed between two prideful fiefdoms of the Senate — the Foreign Relations Committee and the Armed Services Committee.

The two committees have been headed for a collision for some time, largely because of the way an increasingly restive, skeptical Foreign Relations Committee kept poking into the military domain of the Armed Services Committee. What finally lit the fuse was the controversy over an antiballistic missile (ABM) defense system.

In the ABM debate, the two committees have been thrown openly into adversary roles; the Foreign Relations spearheading the opposition and the Armed Services defending the Safeguard missile system. It is basically a struggle between power and prestige in the Senate, and in the long run this equation may be more decisive than all the technical arguments that will be thrown back and forth in the weeks ahead.

Along with the Appropriations and Finance Committees, the Armed Services Committee is one of the seats of power in the Senate. Its power grows out of the very immensity of the military establishment. At its disposal are billions of dollars in contracts, billions of dollars in bases—and that means political power, as Lyndon B. Johnson quickly discovered as a senior member of the committee back in the 1950's.

It is no accident that military bases spring up or weapons contracts are placed in the home districts of committee members. The Pentagon takes care of the committee members, and the Senators take care of colleagues not on the committee. The very enormity of the power tends to intimidate even some committee members. One member from a state with several military bases, for example, recently confided to a colleague that he did not think David Packard should be confirmed as Deputy Secretary of Defense because of a potential conflict of interest. But he confessed he did not dare vote against the nomination for fear of retaliation.

The Foreign Relations Committee, in contrast, has little tangible political power. About the only spending it authorizes is the foreign aid bill, and even the committee members have gotten bored with that. But as a group that can second-guess the executive branch on foreign policy, the committee does have prestige, to the point that Senators are willing to give up power to go on the committee.

Without this prestige, the Foreign Relations Committee never would have dared take on the powerful Armed Services Committee with its interlocking directorateship on the Appropriations Committee. That it has been able to pull off a palace revolt against the Senate military establishment also reflects the fact that the Foreign Relations Committee has the respect of the broad moderate coalition that now rules the Senate.

### Language of Coalition

The Senate as a whole may not always agree with the dovish views of J. W. Fulbright, Mike Mansfield, Stuart Symington, Albert Gore, George Aiken, Clifford Case and John Sherman Cooper. But at least they are talking the language of the moderate coalition, expressing its anxieties, outlining its desires.

The leaders of the Armed Services Committee once commanded such respect in the Senate. But they had become isolated and left behind by change. In a Senate becoming progressively younger and more moderate, the Armed Services Committee has become the outpost —along with the Appropriations Committee—of the old conservative establishment.

There are some younger moderates on the committee, such as Daniel K. Inouye of Hawaii, Thomas J. McIntyre of New Hampshire on the Democratic side and Edward W. Brooke of Massachusetts and Richard S. Schweiker of Pennsylvania recently appointed to the Republican side. But they are junior voices seldom heard. The voices that count are those of Richard B. Russell, who moved over this year to become chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and Senator John C. Stennis of Mississippi, the new chairman and Senator Henry M. Jackson of Washington, who has joined hands with the conservatives on military matters.

On the Republican side the lineup reads like the batting order of the old guard — Strom Thurmond, John G. Tower, Pete H. Dominick, George Murphy, with Barry Goldwater now in the junior cleanup spot.

With its power and prestige of yesteryear, the Armed Services Committee used to rule the Senate when it came to military matters. It brought its bills to the floor more for adulation than approval, and it was not at all unusual for the Senate in an hour to vote billions for the Pentagon on just the say-so of a committee report.

Perhaps because it has become so entrenched in power, the Armed Services Committee gave up doing its homework and began relying too much on the word of the Pentagon. That is one reason the ABM opposition has been able to seize the initiative. Some members of the Foreign Relations Committee have been doing their homework—in seminars with scientists as well as public hearings by the Disarmament Subcommittee. As a result they have been able to raise technical questions that senior members of the Armed Services Committee do not understand, much less know the answers to.

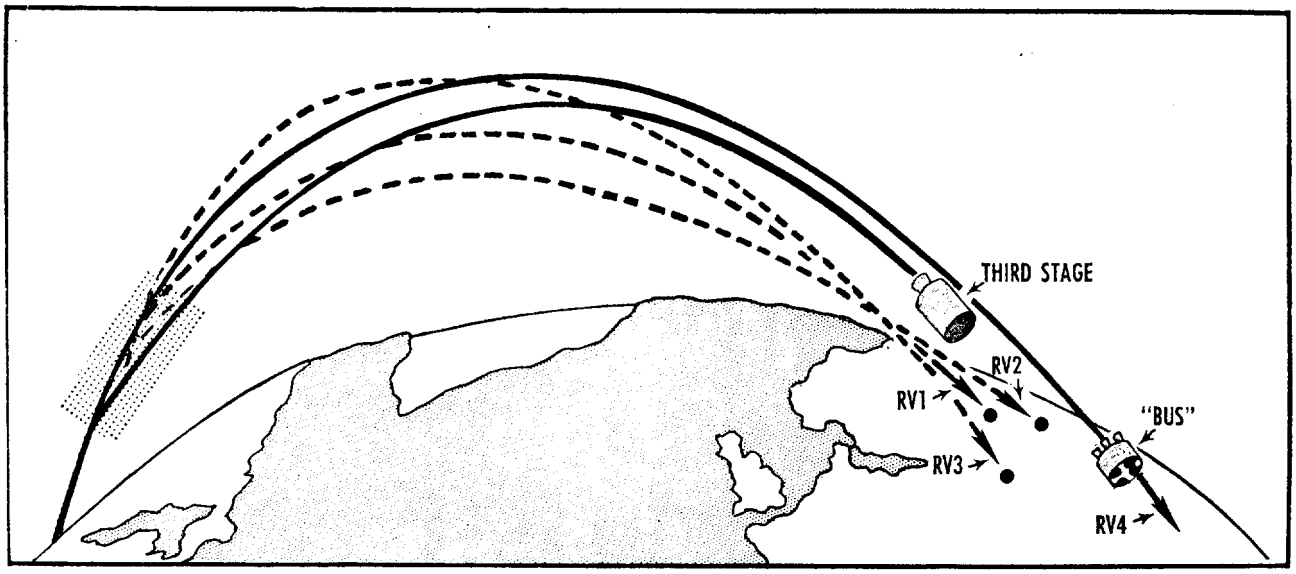
### 'Educational' Hearings

Thus far the two committees have been sparring at arms length, each holding "educational" hearings aimed at the Senate as a whole and in particular at a few critical wavering Senators. When they finally tangle on the Senate floor this spring, there's likely to be one of those prolonged debates, such as the Southerners know how to endure but which the moderates are learning how to wage.

By mustering all the power at its disposal, by invoking the theme of "national security," and by relying on some Administration pressure on Republican ranks, the Armed Services Committee is likely to prevail. But whichever way the ABM issue goes, the Senate military establishment will not be quite the same quite so all powerful.

—JOHN W. FINNEY

AN ABM DOESN'T HAVE TO BE




Adapted from the Scientific American

*The MIRV concept on which the Minuteman III and Poseidon are based calls for an offensive missile carrying aloft a "bus" containing several individual re-entry vehicles (RVs). They would be released sequentially and directed to different targets by adjusting the bus's speed and direction after each separation. It could be a "counterforce" weapon as well as a penetrator of ABM defenses.*

ICBMs. Russian decision-makers, who must assume that Sentinel might perform better than they expect, will at least have to consider this possibility as they plan their offensive capabilities.

More important, they will have to respond on the assumption that the Sentinel decision may foreshadow a decision to build an anti-Russian ABM system. Hence it is probably not a question of whether the U.S.S.R. will respond to Sentinel but rather of whether the U.S.S.R. will limit its response to one that does not require an American counterresponse, and of whether it is too late to stop the Sentinel deployment.

## Pre-emptive Capability

THE IMPORTANCE of somehow

ICBMs, most of which would presumably have been destroyed.

It may seem unlikely that either superpower would initiate such a pre-emptive attack in view of the great uncertainties in effectiveness (particularly with respect to defenses) and the disastrous consequences if even a comparatively small fraction of the adversary's retaliatory force should get through. With both MIRVs and an ABM system, however, such a pre-emptive attack would not seem as unlikely as it does now.

It might not appear irrational to some, for example, if an uncontrollable nuclear exchange seemed almost certain and if by striking first one could limit damage to a significantly lower level than if the adversary were to strike the first blow. In short, if one or

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On the other hand, where there were reasons other than a desire to improve American damage-limiting capability with respect to the U.S.S.R., the United States has proceeded with programs in spite of their probably escalating effect on the arms race or their effect on first-strike incentives. This was true in the case of the MIRVs and Sentinel.

Should more weight be given in the future to developing damage-limiting capabilities? Or should more weight be given to minimizing the probability of a thermonuclear exchange and curtailing the strategic arms race? It is hard to see how one can have it both ways.

In retrospect, controlling or reversing [illegible] capabilities could have been accomplished more easily a few years ago when the possi-